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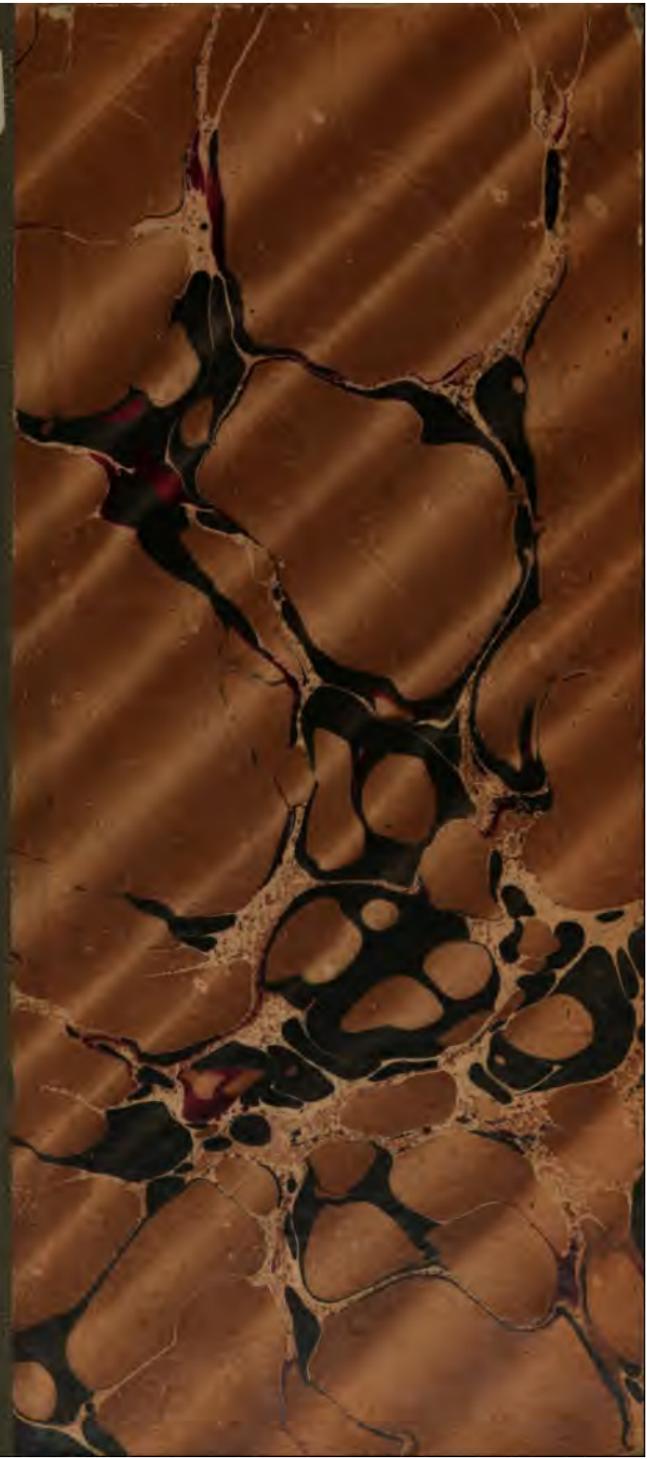
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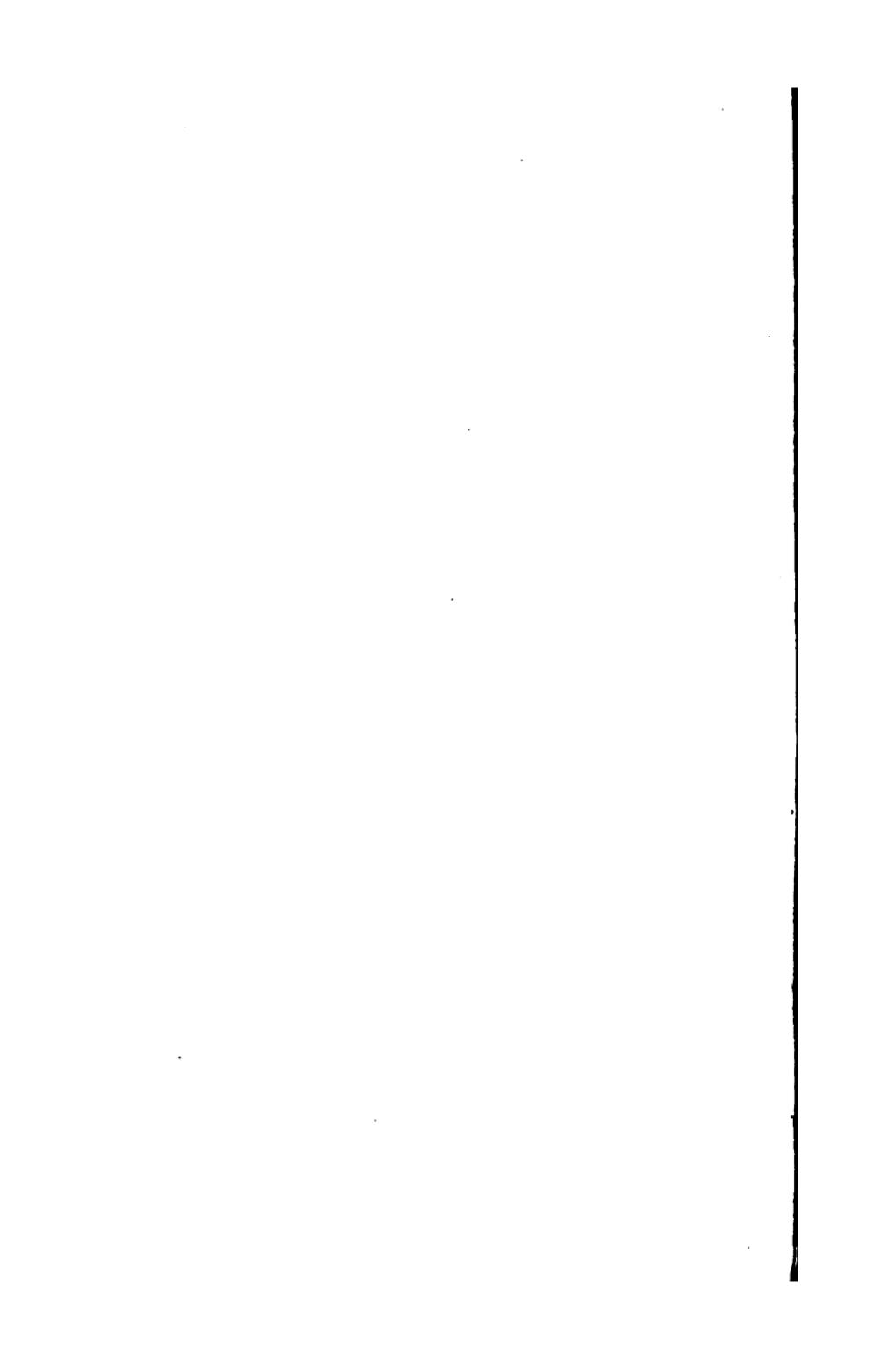
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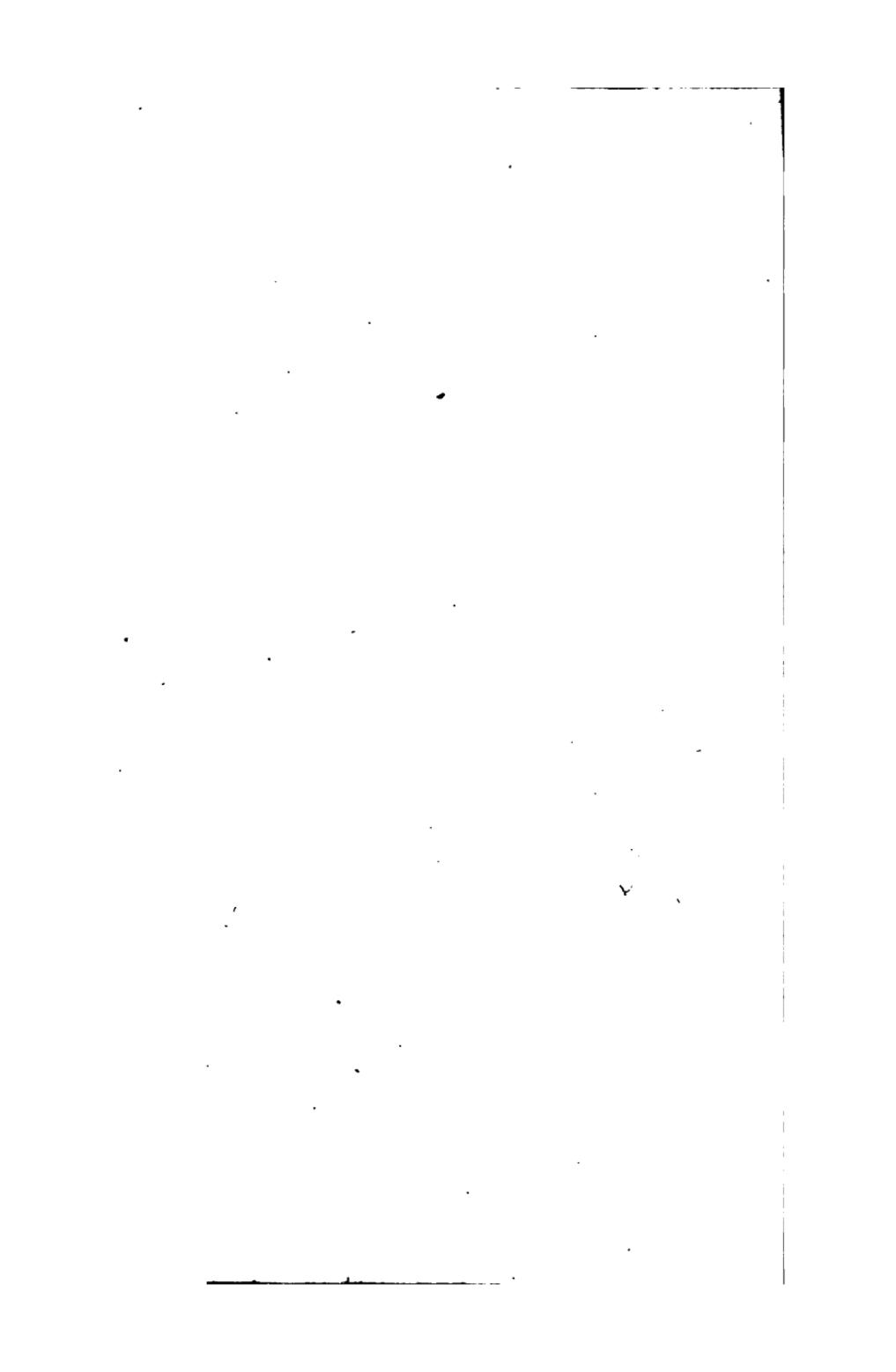


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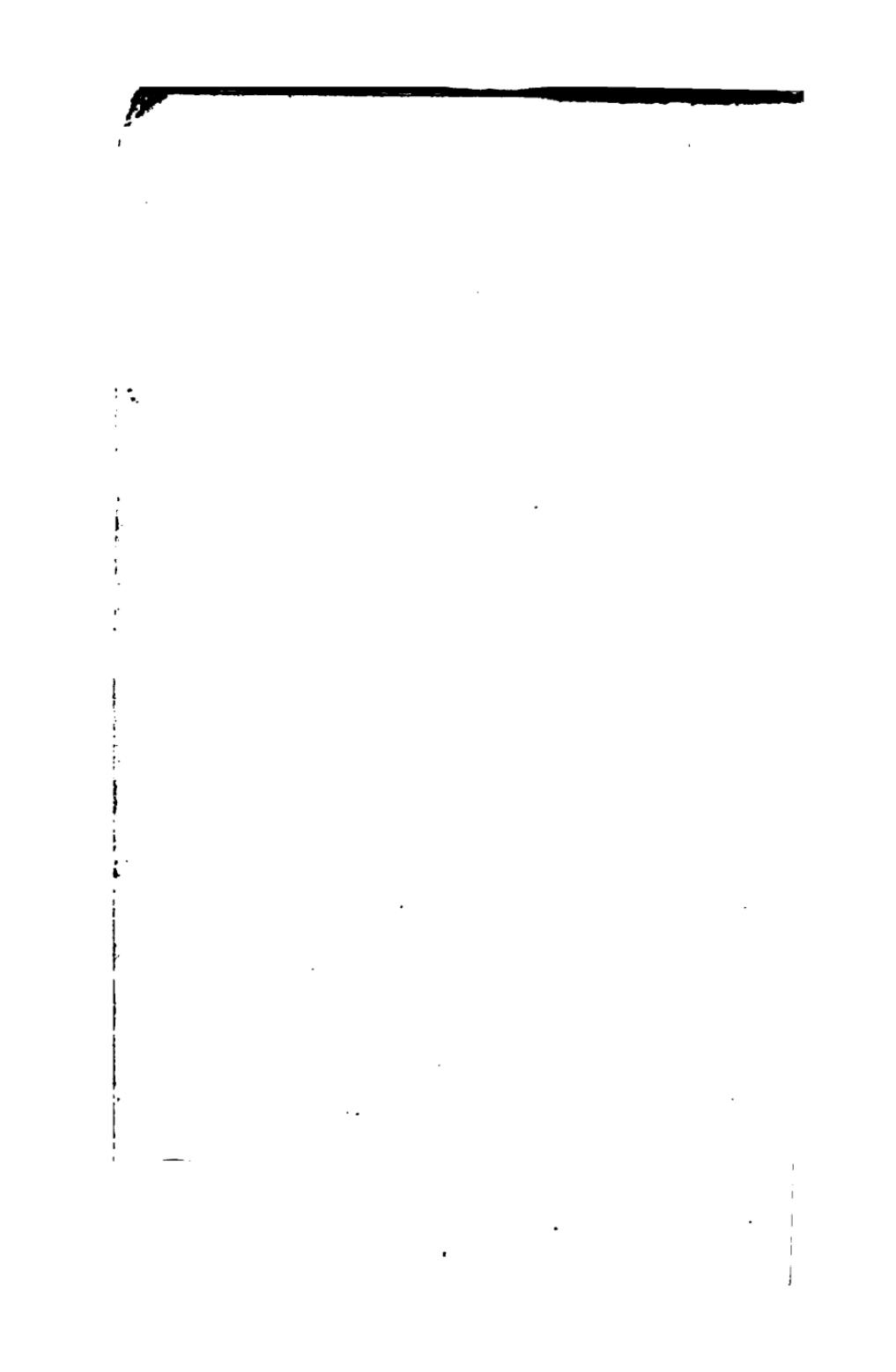
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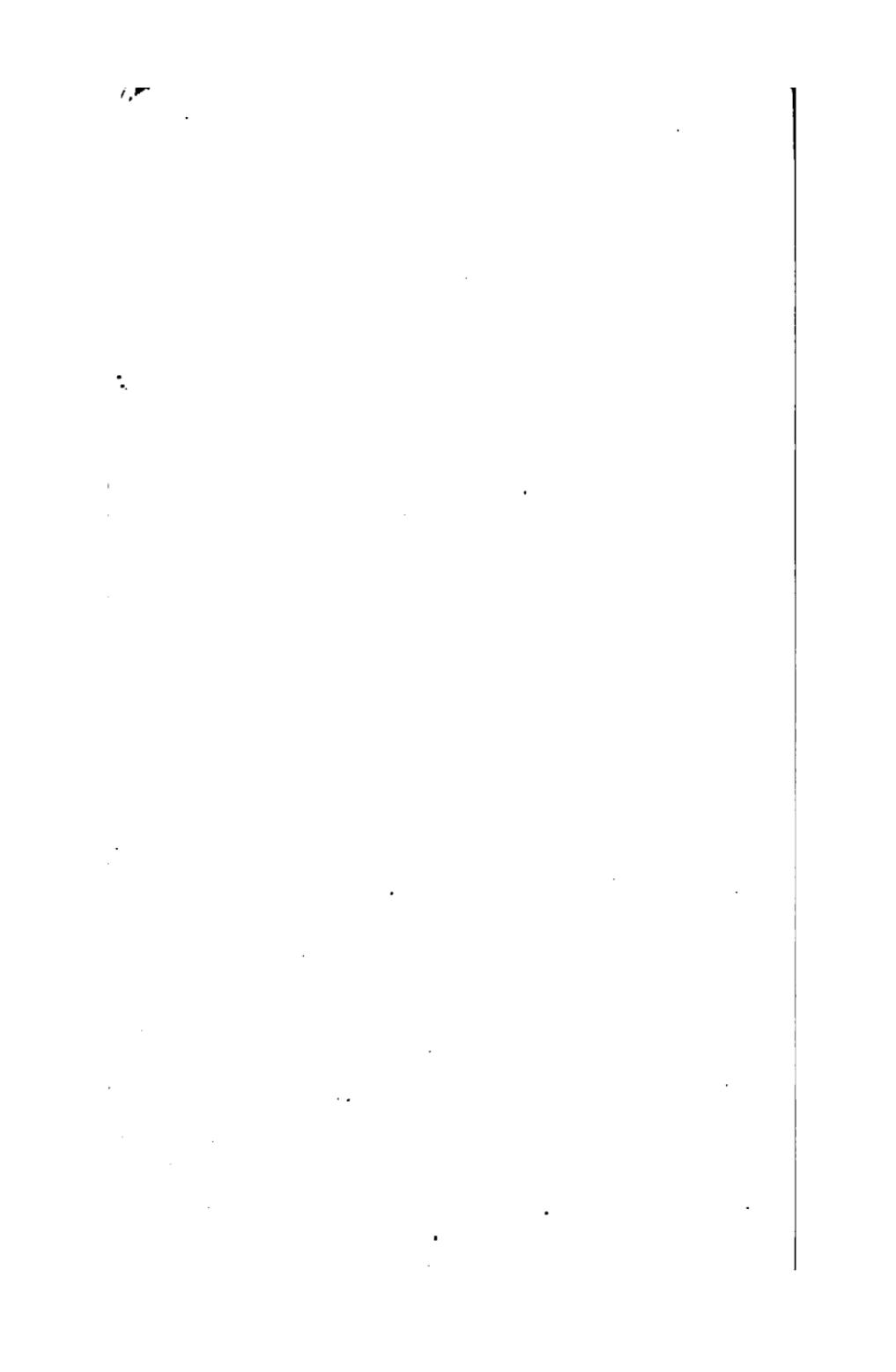




Aberdeen  
Three Hundred  
Years Ago

BY  
JOHN BULLOCK

*ABERDEEN*  
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1884



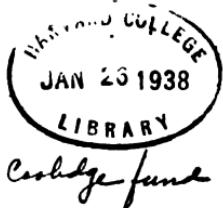
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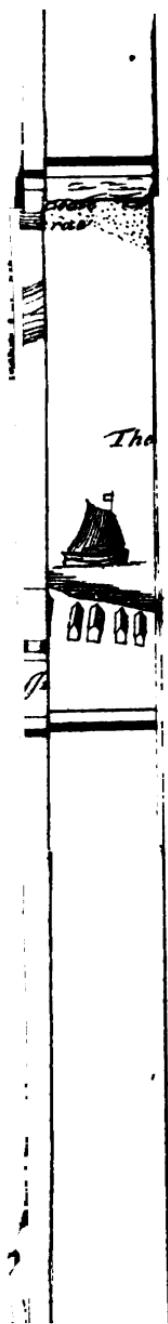
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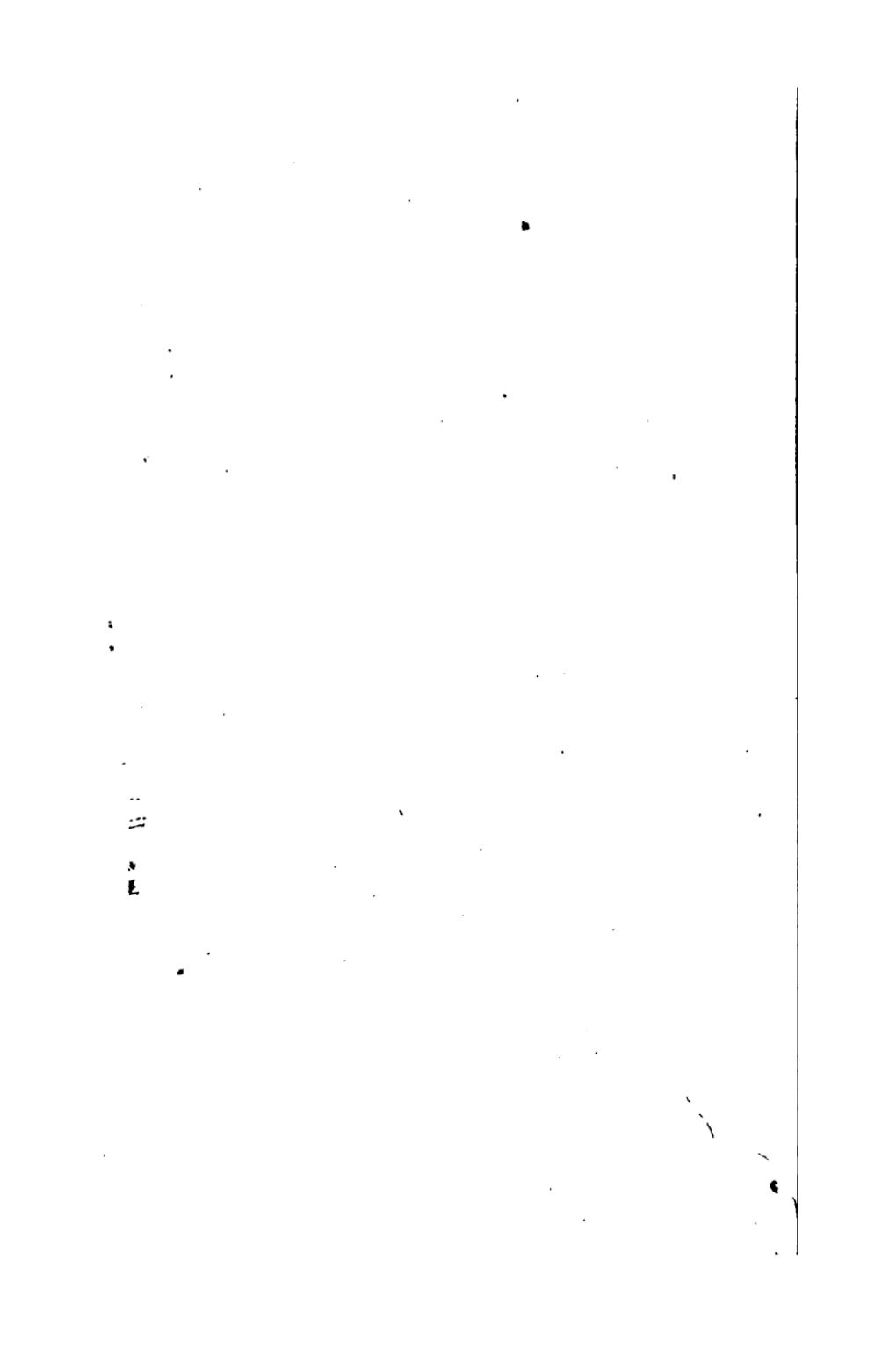


ABERDEEN :  
PRINTED BY W. JOLLY & SONS, 23 BRIDGE STREET.

TO  
SURGEON-MAJOR GEORGE KING, LL.D.  
I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK,  
AS A SLIGHT PROOF OF MY  
ADMIRATION OF HIS RARE GIFTS,  
AND IN TOKEN  
OF OUR  
INHERITED FRIENDSHIP.

"Long before Edinburgh had acquired the precedence of a capital, or even the first place among the four burghs of Southern Scotland; while Glasgow was yet an insignificant dependant on its Bishop, Aberdeen had taken its place as a great and independent Royal Burgh."—*Cosmo Innes.*







## Aberdeen Three Hundred Years Ago.



**C**E do not envy the man who can daily tread the streets of his native town, bristling as it does with memorials of antiquity, and yet never allows his imagination to traverse the lapsed centuries, nor cares to interrogate them as to the state of things long ago, as to what sort of men his forefathers were, or how they were conditioned. The mind so incurious to the past, with its traditions, its history, its interests, may be intensely active in present relations ; but in such indifference it must miss much by which a true realization of the present is reached. We are even a little sceptical as to the justness of its vision of the future. To virtually ignore one's indebtedness to one's ancestry is to be largely oblivious of one's obligations to posterity. This callousness is the more to be wondered at in the case of a town like our own, where

## 2 *Aberdeen Three Hundred Years Ago.*

materials for such investigation are abundant. No town in Scotland has such a perfect set of burgh records as Aberdeen, stretching with almost unbroken continuity from the year 1398—a period of nearly 500 years. There is evidently, however, a growing interest in what has hitherto been relegated to the dry-as-dust antiquary—one of the many hopeful tokens of a horizon widening with the dawn of a new educational regime.

Towns, like individuals, have great diversities in their history. Cities have risen, flourished, and decayed, leaving ruins sometimes scarce sufficient to mark their sites, and sometimes so abundant as to strike the beholder with astonishment. Others, with beginnings as early, have weathered the revolutions of time, and the change of dynasties, and still survive in our own day, with a vitality truly wonderful. Few things are so remarkable in the life of towns as their rate of growth. Some proceed at a slow but sure pace, which for the future can be calculated on the basis of their past; others spring into life, increasing with mushroom-like rapidity that defies all predictions. Three hundred years ago, the sites of many cities, that now teem with busy crowds of men, were the primeval forest and the dismal swamp. Nay,

the almost inaccessible spot where, less than fifty years ago, the lonely trapper built his rude hut, is to-day the abode of tens of thousands, a centre of civilization, easy of access, and a marvel of progress, although, to a great extent, devoid of historic interest.

Few sights are sadder than towns to which has come a period of decay. Their grass-grown streets and half-tenanted houses speak of commercial disaster, superseded industries, former opulence, present poverty. The few remaining inhabitants move about in a listless manner, reflecting in their actions the commercial coma that has overtaken the place. There the antiquary and the uncommercial traveller may find something to interest them, "glad to miss the lumbering of the wheels." But the modern bagman hastens to the railway station, if there be one, with all the speed he may, lest he too be smitten with the evil genius of the place. Towns, however, have their ups and downs. From some access of fresh enterprise, or turn of the wheel of fickle fortune, the decaying city may make a new departure, and even change places with her more successful rivals. Aberdeen has a happy combination of that interest and instructiveness which belong both to great antiquity and to

#### 4 *Aberdeen Three Hundred Years Ago.*

modern progress. There is a rich harvest for the antiquary, as well as for the sociologist. We shall follow them in their endeavour to investigate the *status quo* of Three Hundred Years Ago.

Let us briefly synchronize the period:— Queen Elizabeth was in the middle of her long reign. Her beautiful, ill-fated and frail, if not wicked cousin, had dragged through sixteen wretched years in that dreary prison at Fotheringay, from which she emerged three years later to the liberty of the scaffold. The fair captive's son, James VI., was a “marvellously precocious” lad of eighteen, and a king of seventeen years' standing. John Knox was twelve years dead. The ecclesiastical battle of the day was not Romanism *versus* Protestantism, but merging into Episcopacy *versus* Presbyterianism. Sir Walter Raleigh figured notably as an adventurous sailor, making voyage after voyage with little personal advantage. Bacon, as a young man of four-and-twenty, had just taken his seat in the House of Commons as member for an obscure county town. Shakespeare, a too early married youth of twenty, was living with his wife and family at Stratford-upon-Avon. Ben Jonson was a romping schoolboy of ten, concerned with other plays than

“Every Man in His Humour.” Neither Hampden, Cromwell, Milton, nor Bunyan had yet ‘struck their being into bounds.’ In France the worthless Henry reigned. The bloody story of St. Bartholomew was but twelve years old. The most heroic struggle the world has ever witnessed had just been brought to a glorious end, in the establishment of the Dutch Republic. The little obscure seaboard province of the north, had repulsed the glittering armies of Spain. Every Court in Europe witnessed the struggle with intense interest. William of Orange, the most Christ-like man in history, had just met a cruel and untimely fate at the hands of a religious fanatic. As yet the famous Armada rode at anchor only in Philip’s fertile brain, from which it would have been better, both for himself and his miserable country, had it never emerged. America had been discovered eighty years before, but it was virtually an unknown land—at least to this country. At this period, Aberdeen was a busy, bustling town, full of interests and activities, that gave her some voice and influence in important questions, far beyond the pale of her own immediate neighbourhood. Such was the state of things three hundred years ago.

## 6 *Aberdeen Three Hundred Years Ago.*

In this inquiry into the state of Aberdeen three hundred years ago we shall divide our subject into the following branches :—

- I. TOPOGRAPHY.
- II. INDUSTRIES.
- III. COSTUME.
- IV. EDUCATION.
- V. MORALS.
- VI. AMUSEMENTS.



## Topography.

IT is almost needless to say that the topography of a town is very much determined by the natural conformation of the ground on which it stands. The conformation of the ground on which the City of Aberdeen stands was considerably broken up by a series of ridges, for the most part connected with each other. Three of these rose to some height, attaining the dignity of hills ; the others were little more than sand dunes. The northernmost of the three higher heights was the Port, or Windmill, Hill. By a ridge running almost due south it connected itself with the Castle Hill to the east, and St. Katharine's Hill to the west. Of the lesser heights, the Heading Hill was divided from the Castle Hill by a deep ravine. It was the Golgotha of Aberdeen—the place of executions. On the west, where the group of the Free Churches now stand, lay St. John's Hill, while in the same vicinity lay the Woolman-hill and the School Hill.

The city was divided into four wards. The *Town* or *Even Quarter* embraced the Castle-gate, the Broadgate, and the Gallowgate. The

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*Futtie Quarter* consisted of the seaward suburb of that name. The *Green Quarter* was composed of the district lying between St. Katharine's Hill and the Denburn. The *Crooked Quarter* wound down the Shiprow and up the Netherkirkgate. The burgh royalty over which the jurisdiction of the magistrates prevailed extended much further than the built-on portions of the town. The city bounds were all well defined, and the riding of the marches by the magistrates served the double purpose of keeping in memory the exact limits, and of affording a day's outing—an occasion of much mirth and horseplay. The town proper lay along the heights. It virtually consisted of one long street, in form resembling a crozier, lying prone, with the foot on the Port Hill, the staff stretching down the Gallowgate, and the crook winding round St. Katharine's Hill. There were a few minor streets, rows, vennels and lanes, running off the main streets. The chief reason for building on the heights was probably a strategic one, but there were also sanitary reasons. Where there are hills there are dales, and except where their waters find a suitable outlet, stagnant pools and marshes are formed, which evolve unwholesome vapours, injurious to health. One of these

marshes existed in a basin lying north-west of the town. Not until the necessities of an ever-growing population made it absolutely necessary, was this "puddle" drained off and the "Lochlands" reclaimed for building purposes. Originally the Loch had an elongated shape. It was fordable at a point near the north end, known as the Broad Ford, which led due west through the forest of Stocket.

The town was enclosed by five ports, and from its peculiar position it could not well be otherwise fortified. Nor did the town stand greatly in need of any other than those natural defences, in loch and ravine, by which it was surrounded.

*Gallowgate* or *Causey Port* was situated at the outward extremity of the street known by the former name, and at the south-west corner of the approach to the Port Hill. It was a very ancient structure, and bore the Royal arms over it, for the town was a Royal Burgh, dating from 1178.

*Justice* or *Thieves' Port* was built as far back as 1439, at the north-east corner of the Castlegate. It derived its name from the circumstance that the top of it was appropriated for the exposure of the heads or limbs of executed criminals. Here, for example, the left foot of Wallace was exposed,

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and at a later date “one lyge and foote” of the great Marquis of Montrose.

*Futtie Port* stood at the south-east corner of the Castlegate, and was in the direct line of communication with Futtie village.

*Trinity* or *Quay Head Port* stood in the south end of the Shiprow, within a few yards of the Shore Brae. As it led to the Trinity Friars Port, as well as to the Quay, it was known by both these names.

*Netherkirkgate Port* was in the street of that name, below the east end of the lane which led to the Flour Mill.

*Upperkirkgate Port*, a very ancient structure, was situated in the Upperkirkgate, a little below Drum’s Lane. It must have been a very substantial erection, for a gallery had been built over it, having apartments that communicated with the adjoining houses on the north side. It is just ninety years since this, the last of the ports, was swept away, as a useless obstruction of the traffic in the street. These ports were carefully locked every night, and afforded the inhabitants a sense of security from any very sudden surprise.

The following is a list of the ancient streets in the order we shall describe them :—Gallowgate, Broadgate, Castlegate, Upperkirkgait,

Skulhill, Wasterkirkgaitt, Nedderkirkgaitt,  
Round Table, Green or Bow Brigg Street,  
Aidie's Wynd, Huxter Wynd, Futtie Wynd,  
Ship Raw, Chequar Raw, Ghaist Raw, Ratoun  
Raw and the Vennel.

The following quaint sketch in rhyme may appropriately introduce our remarks on the more detailed topography of the town. The original is in the elegant Latin of Dr. Arthur Johnston, and is thus rudely Englished by John Barclay :—

#### NEW ABERDEEN.

New Aberdeen enriched by *Dees* clear streams  
All praise from Ancient *Cities* justly claims,  
It's bless'd with Churches famous in all lands,  
And Temples framed by no mortall hands.  
*Muses* also famous as once *Rome* did grace,  
Have hallowed a *House* into this place.  
A *Colledge* may be seen not far from thence,  
Where Learning fixed hath its residence.  
The *Mercat-place* where men resort for gain,  
Is stretched out into a spacious Plain :  
There you the stately *Judgement-House* may view  
Whose *Battlements* are of a *Starry-Hew* :  
There *Palaces* of *Peers* you may espy,  
Whose *Lofty-Tops* approach unto the *Sky*,  
And *Towns-Mens-Houses* there you may behold,  
Which garnish'd are and shining like the Gold.  
What need I further the *three Hills* to name  
Which as *three Bulwarks* fortifie the *Same*.  
Like these on which that *City* doeth stand,  
Which once as *Head* did all the Earth command.  
The *Wool-man-hill* which all the rest out-*vyes*  
In pleasantness, this *City* beautifies :  
There is the *Well of Spa*, that *healthfull Font*,  
Whose *Yrned-hewed-Water* coloureth the *Mount*.  
Not far from thence a *Garden's* to be seen,

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Which unto *Jameson* did appertain ;  
Wherein a little pleasant House doth stand,  
Painted (as I guess) with its *Masters* hand.

The Gallowgate bears a strong resemblance to the High Street of Edinburgh. Both streets are on a hilly ridge, with numerous closes and lanes running, fish-bone fashion, down the declivities on each hand. From these closes, on the west or right-hand side, could be seen the Loch lapping the garden walls at the foot of the brae ; and from the left side, "a full and fair prospect over some fruitfull fields called the King's Meadows," to the Links and the sea, could be got. In the Gallowgate were the mansions of a superior class of the citizens. Not far from the Causey Port, on the left side, stood a stately mansion, Mar Castle, the town residence of the Earl of Mar. Most of the surrounding houses were of wood, although the risk from fire had already led to a prohibition of their renewal. At that time the Gallowgate was a fashionable and decidedly airy locality ; now, its degradation is nearly complete.

The Gallowgate naturally led to the Gallow Hill, beyond the precincts of the town, and the word has given rise to some controversy as to its primary meaning. Popularly it is un-

derstood to refer to the gallows (A.S. *Galga*), the instrument used in hanging. It has been urged that as the existence of this word, as applied to places of execution, long preceded that particular mode of death, its derivation may be looked for rather in the Gaelic *Gea-lea*, sorcery stone, having reference to the old and superstitious rites and ordeals—the usual precursors of death, by some means. Between the Gallowgate Port and the Gallow Hill stood Mount Hooly, a word that finds appropriate solution in the Gaelic *Iul-lia*, the judgment stone. There, in very ancient times, justice was administered. Condemned criminals found their day of grace abbreviated to the time taken to traverse the short mile from Iul-lia to Gea-lia.

At the east end of the Gallowgate lay the Broadgate, or Broadgate of the Gallowgate, as it used to be called. It was so named from its great breadth,—broader then than now. No house intervened between the east side of the street and the Ghait Raw. The Broadgate led then, as now, from the Gallowgate to the Castlegate. For long, an unsightly ditch ran along the wide space, becoming a handy, but disgusting receptacle for all sorts of refuse. Off the street frontage, to the east, stood the deserted buildings of

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Greyfriars Monastery, where Marischal College now stands.

“The monks are gone. Their shadows fall no more,  
Tall, frocked and cowled, athwart the evening fields.”

At the Reformation, no immediate use was found for the monastery, but its chapel at once became a Presbyterian kirk. After being the scene of many historic incidents, commotions and defilements, as well as structural alterations, it still stands, a venerable relic of antiquity. In any ordinary town this street would have been called the High Street. It is worthy of note, however, that although we have now more than five hundred streets there is neither a High Street nor a Main Street.

Passing on to the southern extremity of the spacious Broadgate we reach the still more spacious Castlegate. The Castlegate was then the most important street in the town. It is described by the garrulous Gordon, Parson of Rothiemay, as “a squair, about a hundred walking passes in breadth and twyce as many in lenthe—nor can Scotland shewe such ane other.” Bailie Skene tells us that “the *Mercat-place* is larger than in any *Town* in the *Kingdom*, being an hundredth twenty and four double space in length, and about a third part thereof in breadth where it is narrowest,

so that two *Regiments* of foot *Souldiers* may be drawn up in rank and fyle, tho' in open order." It was the seat of government, for here stood the Town House and the Tolbooth, which are described in James Melville's Diary as standing in the *west end*. In short, it was the forum, the very heart of the city. The Cross stood here, and here too was the market-place, which did duty to a large extent for the modern shop. Many of the chief citizens resided here. Among others, Earl Marischal had his "hall," and the powerful family of Menzies their residence, known as "Pitfoddels' Lodging."

The Upperkirkgate ran west just where the Gallowgate and the Broadgate meet. It led through one of the ports to the Upper gate of St. Nicholas Church ; whence the name.

The Schoolhill was an extension of the Upperkirkgate. Here stood the Grammar School, and at an earlier date the Blackfriars Monastery. In the Schoolhill also stood a castellated mansion, where George Jamesone, the Scottish Vandyck, was afterwards born. The house, which still stands, was built by Andrew Jamesone, the artist's father, who was a "maister massone." This street led to "a litle green swelling hill . . . . corruptlie called the Womanhill [and Woollen

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Hill] bot more properlie THE WOOLMANHILL, because it is affirmed that in old tymes the sellers of wool quho came from the neirest pairts about the toune took ther stand upon mercat dayes." On the west side of the hill stands the Well of Spa, "a choise Medicinall *Spring*, . . . . built with hewen-ston, very specifick for *Gout*, *Gravell*, *Collick*, and *Hydropsie* . . . ." It is worthy of note that the first topographical work connected with Scotland is on the Well of Spa. It is entitled, "Ane Breif Descriptioun of the Qualiteis and Effectis of the Well of the Woman Hill besyde Abirdene Anno Do. 1580." Close by the well was the Play-field, where dramas and similar amusements were enacted. It was afterwards converted into Jamesone's Four-neukit garden.

The Wasterkirkgate, afterwards called the Back Wynd, lay behind the church, and indeed behind everything in the shape of building in that direction. It gave access to the west side of the church. Here too, stood the Music or Sang School.

The Netherkirkgate led to the kirk from the south end of the Broadgate. Half way down the street stood the port, already referred to. Outside the Port there was a spring well with its Wellhouse or *Wallhouse*,

the probable origin of the more modern *Wallace* Nook.

At the top of the Netherkirkgate stood the Round Table. Vain efforts have been made to connect this with the Round Table of King Arthur and his Knights. For though he held his Court in many places in Scotland, and even in the vicinity of Aberdeen, he does not seem to have held it in the city. If it was not a detached and rounded block of buildings in the then crowded locality, the name must remain a crux on which the antiquary may whet his wit.

The Green is one of the most ancient parts of the city. It extended westward until checked by the Denburn, the town's boundary in that direction. In ancient times it was a very important place, lying at the "Kingis Yetts," in allusion to its being in the vicinity of the Royal residences. The Bow Brig crossed the Denburn, "a little rivulett of the Dee." This was, at the time of which we write, the principal access of the town. Across the Bow Brig and through the Green streamed all the traffic with the south and part of that with the west.

Aidie's Wynd formed the connecting link between the lower ends of the Shiprow and the Netherkirkgate.

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Huckster Wynd was a short street off the Broadgate, situated not far from the Town House. It was a business place, the Exchange of the town.

Futtie Wynd led from the south-east corner of the Castlegate, through the Futtie Port, to the ancient fishing village of that name. This wynd is said to have existed as early as 1281. At Futtie stood the Block House, built in 1532 to command the harbour mouth. The origin of the name Futtie has given rise to considerable discussion. It has been modernised without much warrant into Footdee.

The Ship Raw is probably the oldest part of the town, as some of the existing buildings attest. Near the Shore Brae stood the Trinity or Quay Head Port, and it was the most direct road to the harbour and the shipping. We like to associate the Shiprow with the memory of Provost Davidson, who fell whilst gallantly leading his fellow-citizens at Harlaw. Besides keeping a wine shop, or *Taberna*, he was a merchant, having his place of business in the Shiprow.

Chequar Raw was so named from the fact that William the Lion established his mint or exchequer there.

The west side of the Broadgate was called the Ghaist Raw or Gastraw. The name has

given some trouble to the philologist. Its overlooking St. Nicholas churchyard, has suggested the explanation of the name "Ghaist" or "Ghost." In charters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is termed *vicus lemurum*. Others derive it from the circumstance that it was here that hostleries or houses of entertainment existed, —that it was the *Guest Raw*.

Rotten or Ratoun Raw was a small lane adjoining the Guestrow, but such have been the changes in the locality that its site cannot be identified except on Parson Gordon's map. The name of this lane also, has given the philologist scope for ingenuity. It is common to many towns in Scotland and England, Rotten Row, Hyde Park, being the best known. About a dozen fairly plausible explanations have been suggested, but we are inclined to accept *rattin*, an old Scotch word, meaning a rough board, on the supposition that the houses were composed of or covered with "rattins," as the most probable.

The Vennel Lane, sometimes called Gordon's Wynd, ran from near the lower end of the Gallowgate westward towards the Loch.

The town occupied a large area of ground considering the population, which probably did not exceed five thousand. This arose

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from the fact that most of the houses had considerable gardens and orchards stretching behind. Besides these, which must have greatly enhanced the appearance of the town, there was a large number of trees, ash being conspicuous. There is evidence that the surrounding country was well wooded, for frequent reference is made to the Forest of Stocket, one of the seven Royal Forests of Aberdeenshire. There was also a roominess about the houses, especially of the better classes, which required considerable space.

A nobleman's or gentleman's house of the period consisted of what was called a "forehouse" or front house, with a quadrangle of buildings in the rear, surrounding a courtyard or close. A long garden stretched behind all this. The forehouse was frequently embellished with a wooden gallery or balcony, with an outside stair, called a "forestair," leading up to it. Dunbar says:—

"Your foirstairis makis your housses mirk,  
Lyk na cuntry bot heir at hame."

From the balconies the inmates could obtain a fine view of those pageants, processions, and Royal progresses so frequent and so imposing. On these occasions the balconies were decorated with rich coloured hangings,

and with their finely attired occupants were a spectacle in themselves. A covered or uncovered passage, usually guarded at the street by a strong iron gate, led through to the courtyard, or "close," which was often of considerable dimensions. The close was surrounded on at least three sides by buildings, in which the inmates enjoyed great quiet and privacy. The whole arrangement was the outcome of the turbulence of those times, and adopted as a precautionary measure against surprise and attack. One sees in Paris of to-day a survival of the same arrangement of domestic architecture, the main object of which is to bestow some immunity from danger and the risks of lawlessness. The same immunity was obtained by the humbler classes in the cheaper way of presenting only the gables of their houses to the street, thus serving the double economy of safety and of a smaller feu-duty for frontage. Another structural difference subsisted between the houses of the upper and lower classes, in the matter of the roofs. The former were covered with a species of stone slabs; the latter continued to be thatched with heather or straw, until these were prohibited, like the timber structures so open to the risk of fire.

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Before passing from this branch of our subject we must glance at the public buildings of the time. First there was the venerable pile, the Church of St. Nicholas. It stood due east and west, and the whole fabric had, in Catholic times, constituted but one church, complete in all its appointments. At the Reformation, dividing walls gave accommodation to two sets of worshippers, one in the west or Old Church, and one in the east or New Church. Within its walls the chief men of the town found honourable resting places. "There is no church," says Gordon, "so neat and beautiful to be seen in Scotland." From its old oak steeple, which it has been our misfortune to see burned to the ground, pealed forth for centuries those bells whose sound has now suffered eternal eclipse. There were other two churches in the town. Greyfriars, as has been mentioned, was the chapel attached to the monastery of the same name. At Futtie a small building was erected for the benefit of the fisher folk, named St. Clements, after the patron saint of the village. There was a hospital, called St. Thomas Hospital, or The Beadhouse, for the support of indigent burgesses. It was founded in 1459, and lay on the east of St. Nicholas

Church. On the Castle Hill stood St. Ninian's Chapel, disused since the Reformation for all religious services except those connected with the lying in state of persons of distinction. It also served as the lighthouse of the period, at its eastern end a beacon containing "a great bowet with three flaming lights" being displayed.

While we find in all this much to interest and not a little to admire, there remains something to be said regarding what was neither slighty nor savoury. One reads in ancient history that the lazy Roman matrons flung from their windows the refuse of the house, including broken crockery, which was often like to make broken heads of the passengers on the streets below. History repeating herself, attests the fact that the housewives of the Modern Athens were wont to play similar feats of legerdemain, accompanied by the cabalistic "Gardy Loo" (gardez l'eau), so tantalising to the half-drenched passer by. Whether the Aberdeen cummers of 1600 were addicted to such scurvy tricks tradition does not say. But the Burgh Records tell that the streets of the period were cumbered with "middings." The town, too, was enlivened by swine running at large in the streets. At ordinary times, thcse were

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accepted as the inevitable ; but on such high occasions as a Royal visit, or a meeting of the General Assembly, the Magistrates issued a proclamation, ordering, under pains and penalties, the removal of these nuisances.

“ May name pas throw your principall gaittis,  
For stink of haddockis and of scaittis,  
For cryis of carlingis and debaittis  
For fensum flyttingis of defame.”

This is significant, as showing the absence of sanitary arrangements. Of course there was nothing of the nature of sewerage or more than mere surface drainage, assisted happily by the uneven character of the ground. What we call the cleansing and lighting department of our civic arrangements had then no existence. What wonder that the plague visited the town periodically ? With a curious obliviousness to causes and effects, whilst most stringent measures were adopted to prevent infection being brought to the town, little or nothing was done to prevent its being generated in the very heart of the town. The citizens had good reason to be frightened, when we remember that on one occasion one-fifth of the entire population of eight thousand fell victims to the dreaded plague.

## Industries.

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**A**NOTHER interesting question suggests itself—What were the prevailing handi-crafts or industries of the time? In considering these, it is needless to say that we look in vain for anything analogous to the highly organised industries of to-day. Associated labour was utterly unknown; each person worked independently. At the same time, the advantages of associations of tradesmen for certain beneficiary and protective purposes were very early recognised. These took the form of the Incorporated Trades.

The following is a list of the occupations that were chiefly engaged in :—

Wobsters.	Fyschers.	Armorars.
Baxters.	Litstars.	Browsters.
Cordonares.	Walkares.	Pewterers.
Hemermen.	Bonnet Makers.	Blacksmiths.
Wrychts and } Cowperis. } Fleschowares.	Lorimers.	Gunsmiths.
Tailzours.	Notars Publik.	Sawisters.
Glovers.	Servands.	Hookmakers.
Maissonis.	Goldsmychts.	Paynters.
Sklaitteris.	Barbers.	Glaziers.
	Skynares.	Pynouris.
	Furriers.	Merchandis.

There are some notable defects in this list. There are no printers, booksellers, bookbinders, nor many other callings that an

advanced civilization has familiarized us with. The first seven trades in the list constituted the Incorporated Trades.

I. The Wobsters or Weavers were the first to obtain a charter of incorporation, which dates as far back as 1449. The fabrics woven were coarse linens and woollens. The flax of the former was partly imported from Holland and partly of home growth—every farmer and crofter having his little patch of lint for domestic use. The wool was a home product. The process of spinning was carried on by women, although it is not likely to have been plied as anything but an occasional industry. It was an unspeakably slow process compared with modern spinning. Yet nimble fingers could achieve considerable results. Weaving, too, was as slow—the weaver primitively throwing the shuttle by hand from side to side of the loom.

II. The Baxters or Bakers were incorporated in 1532. Their skill and honesty were often called in question. In the year of the Union the inhabitants brought a load of “quhyte breid all the way from Brechin to try the baxters witht.” It was statute that no baker should bake *oat bread* or *cakes* for sale, under forfeit of his *girdle*. This is but one of a host of stringent municipal regulations

for the supply and price of food, a subject on which the citizens seem to have been peculiarly sensitive.

III. The Cordwainers or Shoemakers were incorporated about 1484. They derived their name from the Spanish Cordovan leather which was imported for the better class of work. The craft founded an altar to St. Crispin in St. Nicholas Church.

IV. The Hammermen were incorporated in 1519. They were then, as now, an influential body, embracing many crafts that used the hammer, such as Cutlers, Pewterers, Glovers (l), Goldsmiths, Blacksmiths, Gunsmiths, Saddlers (or Lorimers), Armourers, Hookmakers, and Glaziers.

V. The Wrights and Coopers come next, and date from 1527. When we recollect what a *piping* time the brewsters of that day had, casks, barrels and vats must have given much employment to the craft. The masons were at one time associated with these workers in wood, but separated at an early date.

VI. The Fleshers were incorporated in 1532. They were also the Fishdealers of the day, and, like the bakers, were subject to a very strict surveillance both as to the price and the quality of their goods. It was enacted that beef should be sold at one halfpenny per

pound, and mutton at three farthings. In these enactments let not the modern house-wife imagine that this was proof of how easy it was to keep house in those days. It proves the great scarcity of money, and, inferentially, how small must have been the household earnings. It was really symptomatic of a fear that food might become so dear, from the greed of those who dealt in it, that famine would ensue. And despite all the enactments of the so paternal municipal governments of those days, the people often bordered on famine. Breadstuffs were often, from bad harvests and the like, very dear. Now, there was rude plenty, and now, lean scarcity. There can be little doubt that matters librated between a feast and a famine. The feast of fat things following a fever diet, coupled perhaps by the poorish cooking of a somewhat limited range of articles of diet, must account in a large degree for those almost periodic visits of the plague, of which there was such a well founded terror. Few things in the old records are so painfully frequent as the stringent regulations and quarantine established anent the plague. The fear was that it might be brought to the town, more than that it might be bred in it.

VII. The Tailors became a corporation in

the same year. For long they continued jealously to make the clothes of both sexes, female dressmakers being then unknown.

The Litsters (or Dyers) were, in olden times, a very important society, conducting an extensive trade, as so much woollen clothing was worn. Cotton was, of course, unknown, and linens for personal wear were indulged in only by the upper classes. The Litsters assumed great airs of superiority over the other craftsmen, which occasioned much bad feeling from time to time. This must have arisen from their strength as a body, or from the skill which their art involved. They had a hospital of their own for decayed members, their widows, children, and servants, and from its funds their daughters received marriage portions.

Another craft of that day deserves special notice, and that is the Barbers. They were to some extent the medical men, the surgeons, or leachers. Advancing medical knowledge has shorn the barbers of much of their importance, and all that remains to attest their ancient functions are the striped pole (in rude symbolism of a bandaged limb) projecting from their door, and sometimes a surgeon's basin dangling beside it.

Under the disguise of "Pynouris" we

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possess that most useful and respected body of men known as the Shore Porters. Reference to them in the Council registers occurs as early as the 15th century. From the circumstance, perhaps, that almost the entire value of both imports and exports passed through their hands, the interests of the merchants were safeguarded by the Council in a series of enactments, to which the poor Pynouris had to be most submissive. It required no very heinous transgression to fix their "craigis in the jogges," or to be "baneist the toun."

One of the principal employments of the women was knitting. Aberdeen has long been famous for its stocking trade. Three hundred years ago an extensive traffic in knitted goods was conducted with the Continent. The shank seems to have divided the honours with the spinning rock. The lithe fingers of the young girls, as well as of the aged crones, in town and country, were largely employed in the staple industry. The terms spinster and shank-wife would seem, however, to imply that spinning for the maidens and weaving for the matrons was the rule. Walter Cullen, in his most interesting Chronicle, thinks it not beneath him to note as a public event, the death of a certain female functionary, if not monopolist. He says—

“Janett Gardin, medwyfe in Aberdeen, de-pairtit the xiii of Marche, the yeir of God 1575 yeris.”

These were the industrial classes; but there was a large and important commercial class, that was the means not only of enriching itself but of bringing wealth to the town by its enterprise in foreign trade. The chief articles of export consisted of fish, especially salmon, with which the rivers teemed. It was so plentiful that the Deeside farmers were fain to feed their servants on it. These in turn rebelled against it, stipulating at the feeing market that only a limited quantity of salmon was to be given them. Then pork was largely exported, the quality cured at Aberdeen being highly esteemed on the Continent. Skins and hides were sent to those countries where the art of tanning and currying was better understood. The manufactured goods exported were the products of our looms in coarse linen and woollen fabrics, and the knitted goods already referred to. In return for these were imported a goodly list of articles—natural products that a rigorous climate denied us, and manufactured goods that the very backward condition of mechanical arts prevented us supplying ourselves with. Among these were the finer textiles in linens,

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silks and velvets, from the looms of Ypres, Lyons, and Utrecht, also lace, and gold and silver trimmings. We can scarcely include made-up clothes in the list, although the practice was, that when a gentleman passed over to the Continent he took the opportunity of supplying himself with clothes while there. Leather goods, metal work, clocks, watches, pictures, books, writing paper, drugs, salt, pestles, mortars, basins of brass, pigments, such as vermillion, red and white lead, gunpowder, small arms, as ball muskets, carbines, daggers, pistols, swords, cutlery of every description, stoneware, chamber mats, beds of arras, feather beds, down pillows and a great many other articles were imported. The invoices of the period were piously headed with the word "Jhesus," much in the same way as a modern charter party begins—"In the name of God. Amen."

It is a very natural question to ask about the ships used in this extensive traffic. In the absence of any information about shipbuilding in Aberdeen at that time, we are inclined to think it was carried on chiefly in foreign bottoms, vessels of Dutch make; for the Dutch were the greatest shipbuilders in the world. Small row-boats, and even deep-sea fishing craft, may have been built on the

spot, but it is not likely that the building of large sea-going vessels had made much progress at the port of Aberdeen at that early date. It is to our achievements within the present century, as builders of the famous Aberdeen Clippers, that our fame as ship-builders rests. When James VI. went to Norway for his bride, the Aberdonians fitted out a vessel at their own expense as their contingent to the Royal squadron. The vessel, gaily, not to say gaudily, decked and painted, was named the "Nicholas," after the patron saint of the town. Still we have no reason to believe that it was launched from an Aberdeen slip. "No city in Scotland," says an old writer, "sent to the sea ships and cargoes of greater value, and brought home more money in returns; so that the loss of one ship brings more damage to Aberdeen than the loss of ten ships would do to other towns."



## Costume.

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IN the matter of Costume, the prevailing taste was towards extravagance. Sumptuary laws were enacted with the double object of checking this and defining the different ranks of society. These restrictions affected the quality and colour of the stuffs rather than the make of the garments. The upper classes, including the nobility, gentry, and professional people, were permitted to indulge in the more costly materials, including silks, velvets, furs, and scarlet fabrics. The other classes, from those who gained their living by merchandize, downwards, were obliged to limit themselves to such plain materials as coarse woollen cloth and knitted worsteds. These might be lined with lambskin, but not trimmed with fur, and the colour was restricted to sombre browns and black. There was a special prohibition against the use of the plaid. In 1580 it was forbidden to be worn out of doors (under a penalty of forty shillings) by any Burgess of Guild or craftsman, or by their wives or daughters, unless these chose to be

mistaken for women of a certain degraded class or suspected persons.

Abroad, ladies wore a ruffled curtch (mutch), covered with a red hood for head dress. Indoors, if the plaid was worn it was usually taken over the head in the form of a snood. Then there was the Kirtle or short jacket, worn over a skirt distended by the farthingale or hoop. Full indoor dress implied a great display of lace, worn as collars of a very ample style, and as cuffs, vandycked half up the forearm. For ordinary wear, collars and cuffs of plain but fine linen were worn, a good effect being secured by a skilful arrangement or folding of the cloth. The wife of the burgess had to content herself with a russet gown minus the farthingale, and the colour of her hood was not red. Personal ornaments and jewellery consisted chiefly of silver. Brooches, lockets, and rings were common. Pearl and other necklaces and ear-rings were confined to ladies of superior rank.

Amongst the men there was a species of semi-military dress worn, befitting those whose duty it was to keep watch and ward. The purely civil dress of a gentleman consisted of a conical felt hat, his actual rank being signalized by the more or less ornate character

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of the band round it. The body was covered by a doublet, or short tunic, buttoned close up. In the case of gentlemen of rank, the fabric might be some brocaded stuff with slashed sleeves, displaying a light silk beneath. Round the neck a frilled ruff of some sort was worn, but more commonly an ample plain linen collar, covering the shoulders. Full dress converted the plain linen collar into one as large, rich, and beautiful as those with which the fair sex adorned themselves. The wrists were covered with linen cuffs. On the nether limbs were knee breeches, and stockings either of cloth or worsted. Over all, as circumstances might require, a short Spanish cloak was worn. It had no sleeves and completed the dress. The men of the common orders wore some sort of bonnet instead of the hat, and indulged in a much more limited display of linen. In the matter of foot gear, the rich wore the boots and shoes either imported from the Continent, or made from leather of the famous Cordovan tannage. The shoes of the common people consisted of a primitive golosh of one piece, made of untanned hide, worn with the hide side out. The hide was made to meet in long toes; but even shoe toes were not be-

neath the attention of the Town Council, who, amidst a multiplicity of duties, found time to discuss and determine, doubtless according to the eternal fitness of things, the precise number of inches that shoe toes should extend.

Few but the upper classes knew much of the luxury of clean linen underclothing ; and it may be mentioned in this connection, that it was a custom of the time to sleep in what Artemus Ward called “the scandalous costume of The Greek Slave.” As to washing, there was not much of it, and what there was, was done at the Loch, or the Denburn, then a pellucid stream. The litster was in more request than the washerwoman. Besides, there was no soap !



## **Education.**

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LET us now take a brief glance at the state of education and literature. In Old Aberdeen, a University had been established in 1493, for, quoting from the Bull of Pope Alexander VI. authorising its establishment, the people were "ignorant of letters and almost uncivilised." The establishment of King's College constituted a distinct era in the intellectual history of Aberdeen. It attracted a series of learned men, who acted in the capacity of regents or professors. The influence of such men must have been felt, not only by the students that flocked to this seat of learning, but by the community as a whole. The intellectual standard was raised higher than ever it had been before. Indeed, such had been the incitement given to higher education and scholarship, that in 1594 Earl Marischal established a College in New Aberdeen, bearing his name. The students were boarded within the precincts of the college. As now, they wore the picturesque red gown, except

in the case of bursars, who wore a black one. The writer of a "View of the Diocese of Aberdeen" says:—"The inhabitants are for the most part ingenious by nature and improved by education, which is very cheap, the university being so near, so that from this shire there go more scholars abroad throughout England, and even into foreign countries, than from any shire we know of."

The Grammar School, a more ancient institution than either of the colleges, was an excellent feeder for these. The classics were studied with great assiduity, Latin being written and spoken freely by the pupils. As an indication of the *royal* nature of the boys, a deposit of £10 was demanded on their entering the school as a guarantee for their good behaviour.

The Music or Sang School existed so early as 1475. The citizens had a strong taste for the cultivation of music, and the perfection of their services in the church was a subject of admiration. Pupils got their education at the Song School free. Notwithstanding these educational appliances, it were rash to assume anything like widespread knowledge even with the bare elements of education. There was undoubtedly a large educated class, but there

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was a still larger uneducated class. It was no uncommon thing to be unable to sign one's own name. In 1587 an agreement between the town and the craftsmen was drawn up. Following the signatures of the latter that could subscribe come the names of George Elphinstone, saddler, James Duncan, tailor, and Alexander Ronaldson, baxter, followed by the humiliating remark—"with our hands at the pen, led be the notars, at our commands, becaus we cannot writ ourselffs."

Little or no attention was paid to the education of girls. We may rest assured, that except at dames' schools, if such there were, a few lessons on the horn-book was thought to be all the length necessary to carry them. The Horn-Book was a little square of wood with a handle. On the flat part was pasted a copy of the alphabet, followed by *ba ba*, *bo bo*, and a few simple words. Over the printing was fixed a thin transparent sheet of horn. This formed a durable article that served for generations of little learners. It was not till the next century that this state of matters fired the sympathy of an English resident, who petitioned the Town Council for permission to open a school for three months for "maydne bairnes," promising to

teach the “poor for God’s sake and the ritche for reason.”

Books were a scarce commodity. Of course the schools and colleges used them. There was nothing resembling native literature. Books were imported chiefly from English and Continental University towns. They consisted mainly of editions of the classics for the educated, and religious works for the pious. One invoice of the times, still preserved, is for a “kist of buiks” for a physician of Aberdeen. The first edition of the Bible issued from the Scottish press was published in 1579, at a cost of £4 13s. 4d. per copy, “a price,” in Thomas Fuller’s alliterative words, “that put it past the power of poor men’s purses to purchase it.” Its circulation must have been very limited indeed, notwithstanding that all that were deemed able to buy, were *compelled* by the magistrates to do so. Any books printed or published in Scotland had to obtain the imprimatur of the magistrates if secular, and of the General Assembly if religious. Be it remembered that not until 1622 was there a printer in Aberdeen. As for newspapers, there were none anywhere. A piece of news, however urgent,

could not be brought from London in less than ten days, or a fortnight, according to the season and the state of the roads. But even then, there was a sort of telegraphic way of announcing important news—if we can dignify such a rude intelligencer as a beacon-fire with such a name. From of old, well did the people know these dreaded omens flashing their one unwelcome and stereotyped message, “Buckle and be ready; the English are on you.” It has truly been said that “Aberdeen lived within Aberdeen.” The outside world was far away, and, when it did impinge on the Braif Toun, it was too frequently to put either its courage, loyalty, or patriotism to the test. If news came affecting the interests of the town, a painful sense of impotence must have been experienced. Of what was happening, touching their welfare or otherwise, time and space peremptorily forbade anything but a passive reception of the news.



## Morals.

OUR subject possesses a deep interest for the moralist as well as for the antiquary. It would be incomplete without a reference, however slight, to the religious and moral condition of our forefathers three centuries ago, although it is dangerous and delicate ground. Nowhere had the principles of the Reformation struck so deep roots as in Scotland. Without passing an opinion on the comparative merits of the Catholic and Protestant faiths, we think the stern and uncompromising conflict of the period, though waged for religious freedom, was anything but favourable to the growth of religious life, at least among the undiscriminating masses who did not look beneath the surface. To them it was but the passage from the bondage of the Church of Rome to the restraint of the Kirk of Scotland, albeit the latter was that of a more enlightened Christian principle. The leaders of the great revolt adopted too austere an attitude, in order if possible to check the relaxed state of prevailing morals, to restore a lost or defaced spiritual meaning

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to the effete formulae of the Church, and to re-establish the purity of public and private relations. It is not to be forgotten, however, that the morals engendered at that period were much more the result of enactment than of conviction.

Mr. Buckle, in his *History of Civilisation*, adverts to this state of matters. To show how the "character of the Scotch was, in the seventeenth century, dwarfed and mutilated," he culls from kirk session and burgh records (which might have been those of Aberdeen), a series of enactments regarding the conduct of the people in the varied relations of life. It was accounted a sin—

To admit a Catholic into one's inn.

To hold market on Saturday or Monday,  
because near the Sabbath day.

To go from one town to another on Sunday.  
however pressing the business.

To walk in the fields, meadows or streets, or  
to sit at one's door, or to swim, or to shave  
one's beard, on Sunday.

For children to feel tired with the intermin-  
able sermons.

For a woman to wait at a tavern, or to live  
alone, etc., etc.

"Thus," says Mr. Buckle, "the whole sun.

shine of life was, as it were, squeezed out of the community."

The people had scarcely emerged from a state of almost barbarism, in which might was right, where the baron would beard the king, and the king crush the church, without the least compunction. Little regard was had for the sanctity of life, therefore murder was quite common, and committed on the slightest grounds, such as the resenting of a supposed insult, or to wreak revenge for even an imaginary injury. Mere spite found its solace (shall we say?) in this high-handed manner. Other crimes of violence against a person or his property were, as the Burgh Records show, only too common.

So much for the crimes against society. What shall we say about the private vices of the people? Notwithstanding the severity of the laws of Church and State, drunkenness prevailed, with, however, more excuse than now. In the absence of the suitable beverages we possess, it was little wonder that their favourite and general drinks mastered the moderation of men and women alike. Another question, euphemised under the phrase of the *social vice*, here suggests itself. Let us draw a veil over the frail virtue of our ances-

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tors, by a simple statement of the fact, that at the period of which we write, their “irregularities of the affections” resulted in about one-third of the births being illegitimate.

Things had not greatly improved even in 1636, if we believe the testimony of the sainted Samuel Rutherford, who was banished to Aberdeen for two years. He avers that he knew of only one pious family in the town.

Let us now turn from the law breaker to the law maker. We are at once struck with the unnatural severity, not to say brutality, of the laws. Not only murder, but witchcraft, theft, coining, and gambling were put in the category of capital crimes and unrelentingly punished. These punishments were enforced by disgusting modes, sufficient in themselves to debauch the public mind on the very question on which a wholesome public opinion required to be framed. As a commentary to this remark, it is curious to find that the very hangman was hanged. The red-handed murderer, after a very summary trial, was hanged or beheaded, and occasionally quartered. The head and limbs were then exposed in the most public places—a well meant terror to evil-doers, with the unintended result of further familiarising men’s

minds with what was of a degrading character. Witches were usually burned, a fitness being supposed to exist between the purifying flames and the imaginary crime. Drowning was often resorted to, especially in the case of women. The spot selected for this mode of execution was that portion of the harbour called "The Pottie," at the foot of the Shore Brae. There, after a short shrift, the miserable victims were hustled into a sack, which was tied up and then flung into the water. For the murder of an illegitimate child, on one occasion, a man was hanged and three women were drowned. Before their trial, prisoners were frequently tortured in the most brutal way. Criminals condemned to capital punishment were treated very differently then from what they are now. Hurried from the Tolbooth, the wretched creatures were pelted with filth, and jostled to the place of execution by a seething mass of humanity. Men, women, and children came, eager to see the not very edifying spectacle of an execution. The Maiden or Guillotine was very early used as an instrument of death. Imprisonment was occasionally resorted to, a prison being found sometimes in the church steeple, sometimes in the Tolbooth, and sometimes in

unwholesome vaults. But this was never a favourite mode of punishment ; it was both troublesome and expensive. Banishment was visited on petty crimes ; single prisoners, and, in cases of complicity, batches of forty or fifty, were banished from the town. This was a very short-sighted policy to impose on so small a community. There were also other forms of punishment, as the jugs, the pillory and the cucking-stool. This last was used in the case of a virago, a scold, or a slanderer. The victim was tied into the seat and soused overhead in the nearest water, no matter how filthy. Branding with a red-hot iron, and being placed under an eavesdrop, were adopted in certain offences.

The true object of punishment—to be remedial—was not appreciated by the law-makers of those days. The milder methods adopted in modern times for the reclamation of the guilty and the erring had not yet dawned on the minds of our forefathers. Restraints were so unreasonable, and punishments were so vindictively disproportionate to crimes, that it might have been pleaded with justice that they were more than people were able to bear—and in fact their effect was to breed an indiscriminate defiance of both.

It seems anomalous, that along with the lawlessness described, and the severe penalties with which it was visited but not checked, there should have existed an inordinate desire with those in power to extend their jurisdiction far beyond the limits of the graver matters of the law, to the annice and the mint and the cumine, not only of minor morals, but of questions stript of ethical value, or at least beyond the pale of public interest. Those were the days of sumptuary laws, when what one ate and drank, the clothes one wore, and the number of people one invited to one's house on a festive occasion, were prescribed by law. This may have been paternal, warranted by and designed to create an advanced public opinion on the social habits and customs of the day, but, like all paternal governments, it tended to keep the people in childhood. Nowadays such interference would be justly resented as referring to matters of purely personal concern—wisely left to be regulated by personal considerations.

## Amusements.

THE tension of these restraints was not unrelieved by mirth and amusement. But for the sense of humour and the appreciation of the ludicrous, human nature would give way in body and mind.

Each season brought its own appropriate, time-honoured customs and characteristic amusements. There was May Day, with its customary observances—never neglected.

“ All hail to thee, thou first of May,  
Sacred to wonted sport and play,  
To wine and jest and dance and song,  
And mirth that lasts the whole day long.”

On the first Sabbath in May from time immemorial the people, crossing the Dee, invaded the neighbouring county of Kincardine, disporting themselves on the braes and rocks of Torry, and visiting the Bay and Well of St. Fiacre (or Saint Fithock). Then there were the oft-recurring saints' days, from observing which, not all the power of the Reformation could for a long time wean the people. On St. Thomas Day, the 21st of December, for example, old and young went *a-gooding* long after the day had lost its

saintly relations. As for the Yuletide festivities, they died hard, and it needed very stringent municipal measures to compel the people to relinquish what was deemed the survival of mere Popish practices in the rather jolly festivities and hospitalities observed at that period. With regard to amusements proper, Aberdeen had long been famous for its miracle plays and pageants. These were under the direction of the Master of the Civic Revels, the Abbot of Bon-Accord. The members of the various crafts took part in them. Reference has already been made to the Play-field as the scene where the more regular drama was acted by companies of professional players who visited the town, performing their regular stage pieces for the instruction and delectation of the citizens. On the Woolmanhill the spectators were ranged, as in an amphitheatre, while on the plain below were the actors. It has been conjectured that on one of such meetings, Shakespeare, along with a company, visited Aberdeen. Another recreation ground was St. Katharine's Hill, from the top of which a fine view was had of the surrounding country. Street processions were then greatly in vogue. On these occasions the craftsmen paraded the

streets, accompanied by bands of music, and tricked out with all the mummeries and oddities in dress and behaviour of a carnival, and involving a good deal of horseplay. In this category comes the occasional Riding of the Marches, a ceremony conducted with much *eclat* and exuberance of spirits. The Royal visits of the time were also conspicuous. The people were justified in extracting from them what interest and amusement they could: It was pretty nearly all they got for their money, for the truth is, that a Royal progress of the period was neither more nor less than a begging excursion. Many a costly propine did Aberdeen present in this way to the Sovereign with his attendant retinue, who resorted to the "Northern City cold" to replenish his exhausted exchequer. He was but a "gentil sorner."

Most of the amusements were of an outdoor character. The wappinschaw was very popular—skill in the use of arms, whether of the bow and arrow or of explosive projectiles, being very desirable. Golf was a game that was also popular, and in winter, curling on the ice seems to have been practised. Bowling was also indulged in—a suburban

road leading to the bowling green long bore the name of the Bowl Road, the former name of Albion Street.

Of indoor sports fewer indications are left us. Card playing, although tabooed by the clergy, was a most popular amusement, and must have enlivened the long dark winter evenings in the absence of the thousand and one recreations we ourselves possess. "*A common carder*" was the ugly epithet in the indictment, on which one of the Bishops, in 1639, was ejected. And yet what means the pasquill of the period—

"The clergy shuffell and the lawers cut," but that the game was largely practised? Probably the real objection to cards and dice, another common mode of amusement of the period, lay in the gambling which too often accompanied them. The way has been paved for the remark that there was a strong tendency to exceed what was necessary in the way of eating and drinking, until these acts became the *pleasures* of the table. Less objectionable was the pleasure derived from the cultivation of music, in which our fore-fathers had made much commended progress. Various musical instruments were in use, such as the organ, the harp, the vial, the "fydil,"

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the “swesch” (drum), and bagpipe. Indeed the pipe was the first and last sounds heard in the town—a piper being employed to parade through the streets morning and night. This was afterwards discovered to be “an incivil form to be usit within sic a famous burgh, and being often found fault with, als weill be sundrie nychtbouris of the toune as be strangeris,” it was accordingly abolished.

With regard to vocal music, choral singing for the church services was much cultivated, and in social life the song constituted an element of pleasure—it cannot be said, of profit, for many of them were strongly tainted with what is impure. The well meant attempt to convert these ribald rhymes into “Godly Ballants” was more often ludicrous than edifying to such as knew both.

Under this head it may be mentioned, that whilst the wives and daughters of the burgesses plied the shank and the rock, the fair fingers of the ladies did not disdain the use of the “scheith” for knitting, or the needles for embroidery and lace work, as among the elegant accomplishments of their leisure hours. The burning question of *real* lace had not arisen to vex their righteous souls.

## Conclusion.

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IN closing this brief sketch, in which only some of the salient features of the state and condition of Aberdeen and its "indwellers" three hundred years ago, are touched on, it seems not out of place to formulate a few of the points of contrast which have occurred as a running commentary in traversing the preceding pages.

Without any unnecessary depreciation of those bygone times, or undue laudation of our own, it must be admitted that in all essentials the advantage lies with us. There is a sharp contrast between the *good old times* of the Elizabethan period and the present day conditions of life of those whose better fortune it is to live in the Victorian age.

The greatly extended area of modern Aberdeen, with its population increased from that of the little burgh of five thousand, to that of the great city of one hundred and five thousand inhabitants, has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in its amenities and more favourable circumstances. The people are better housed. In comfort and conveni-

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ence dwellings are improved far beyond the experience of the past centuries ; and in respect of architectural appearance, the city daily enhances in a unique beauty that is the admiration of the unbiassed visitor. Sanitary arrangements are improved. The feculent Braid Gutter has been replaced by a network of sewers. Public parks and gardens, the refinements but of yesterday, yield to gentle and simple the purest of pleasures, and the most healthful of resorts.

The struggle for existence is less severe than of old. A fortunate diversity of occupations gives warrant of steady employment, and an enviable prosperity to all classes of the community. Labour is proportionately better paid. Wealth is more equally distributed. Food is cheaper and better, far more varied in kind, and more constant in its supply than it was three hundred years ago. No longer do famine and pestilence stalk at noon-day. And who shall estimate the material and moral gain, of the modern dietary, which includes Tea and Coffee, with their numerous allies, and their common sweetener, Sugar, all of which were unknown to our progenitors? The place of sugar in the domestic economy of our ancestors may be best judged of by the

suggestive fact, that during one of the visits of James VI. to Aberdeen, part of his propine consisted of fourteen pounds of "suckor"! Clearly, it was not a condiment for common use, but "a dainty dish to set before a king."

In the matter of apparel, it is now more appropriate and very much cheaper. The range of fabrics (including the cleanly cotton for underclothing, the cheap product of Manchester power looms) is much more extensive and beautifully varied.

But striking as are these briefly summarized advantages, reached in the course of three centuries, resulting in greater comfort, better health, and increased longevity, they are not more so than those accruing from mental and moral progress. Mind is on the march. Ours are the days of books and free libraries, of pictures and art galleries, of newspapers and telegraphs, of gas and electricity, of science which makes its discoveries faster than they can be recorded, of locomotion so quickened as almost to suggest the annihilation of time and space, and so cheapened that all may travel and reap the benefits of a widened experience.

Education and general intelligence have advanced with gigantic strides. Education is

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now elevated to a national system, and is no longer the privilege of the rich but the birth-right of the very poorest. In nothing, perhaps, is the past found to differ so much from the present as in the position, treatment, and prospects of the young.

Once ignored, they are now the objects of intense interest, environed with educational advantages,

nourishing a youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science and the long result of Time.

What wonder if, in the survival of the fittest, it may be now said of twinned Ignorance and Superstition—Their doom is written?

To this advanced educational machinery may be added the legal provision for the poor, supplemented by an extended system of organized charities, all the products of the “sweeter manners, purer laws,” of to-day.

The volume of crime has diminished—its character is less grave, and the nature and degree of its punishments less cruel than formerly. One noticeable feature of modern social life is, that whilst no class is exempt from producing victims to its peculiar temptations, a criminal class of clearly defined limits is being formed. Under a more humane mode of treatment than the *broken men* of

three hundred years ago were subjected to, reformation more often results.

Life and property are now more secure from outrage, at the darkest hour, than they formerly were at noonday. There are no more midnight surprises by armed men to alarm the sleeping citizens. Fancy the modern representatives of the Lairds of Haddo and Wardhouse and Balquhain, with their retainers, making a midnight raid on the town in 1884, and with the collusion of the Lord Provost slaying and wounding four or five score of the worthy citizens! The posters of the Aberdeen "dailies," we had almost said *hourlies*, would be worth studying next day.

Whilst considerations such as these reveal the gulf between the past and the present, between the blade and stalk of primitive culture and the full ear of a riper civilization, between the heat and burden of the day borne by our forebears in the hard conditions of an unsettled social and political life, and the face of society brightened by more favoured circumstances, they also give an added emphasis to the grateful truth that, **BUT FOR THE PAST THE PRESENT COULD NOT BE.**

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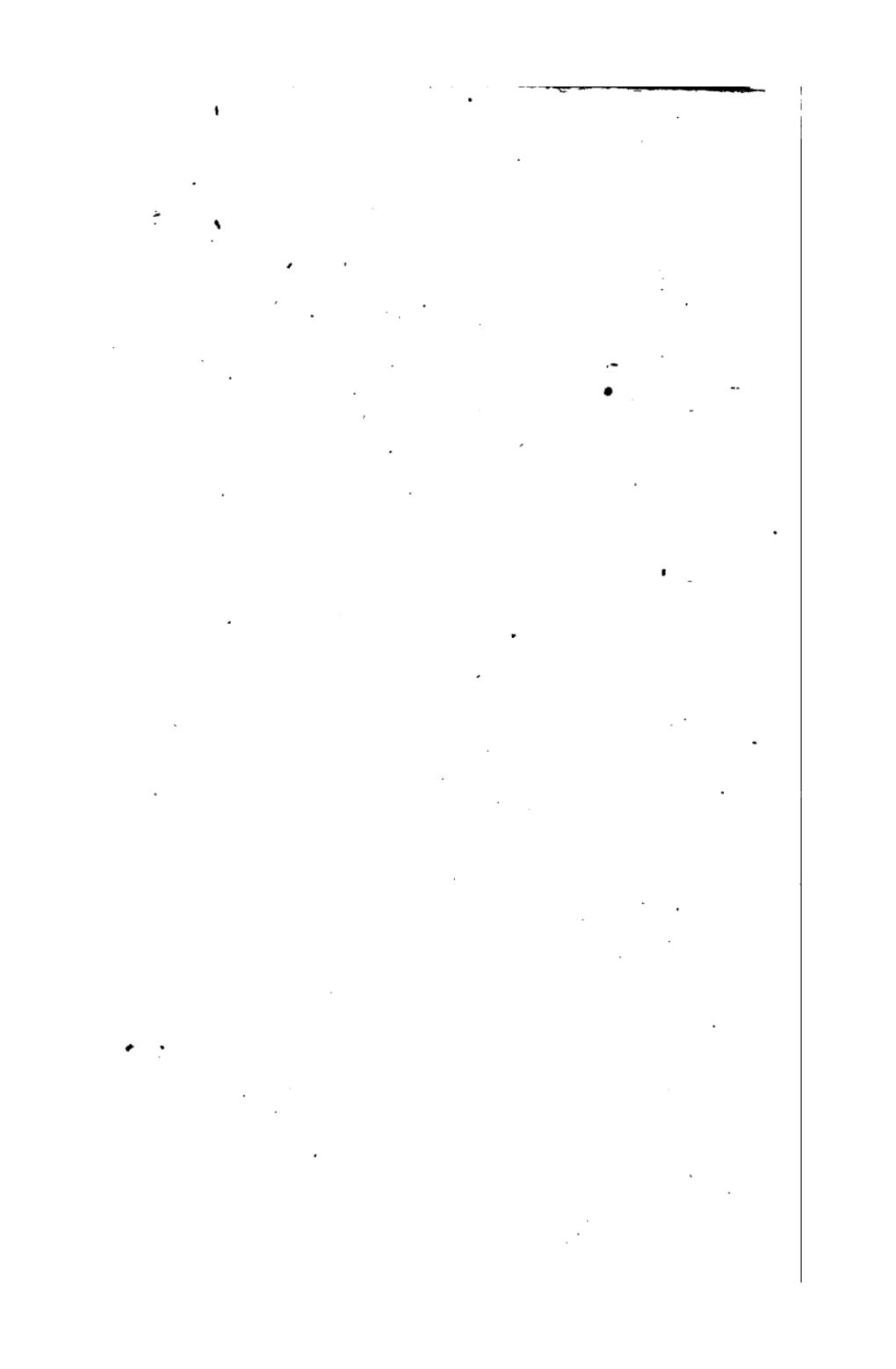
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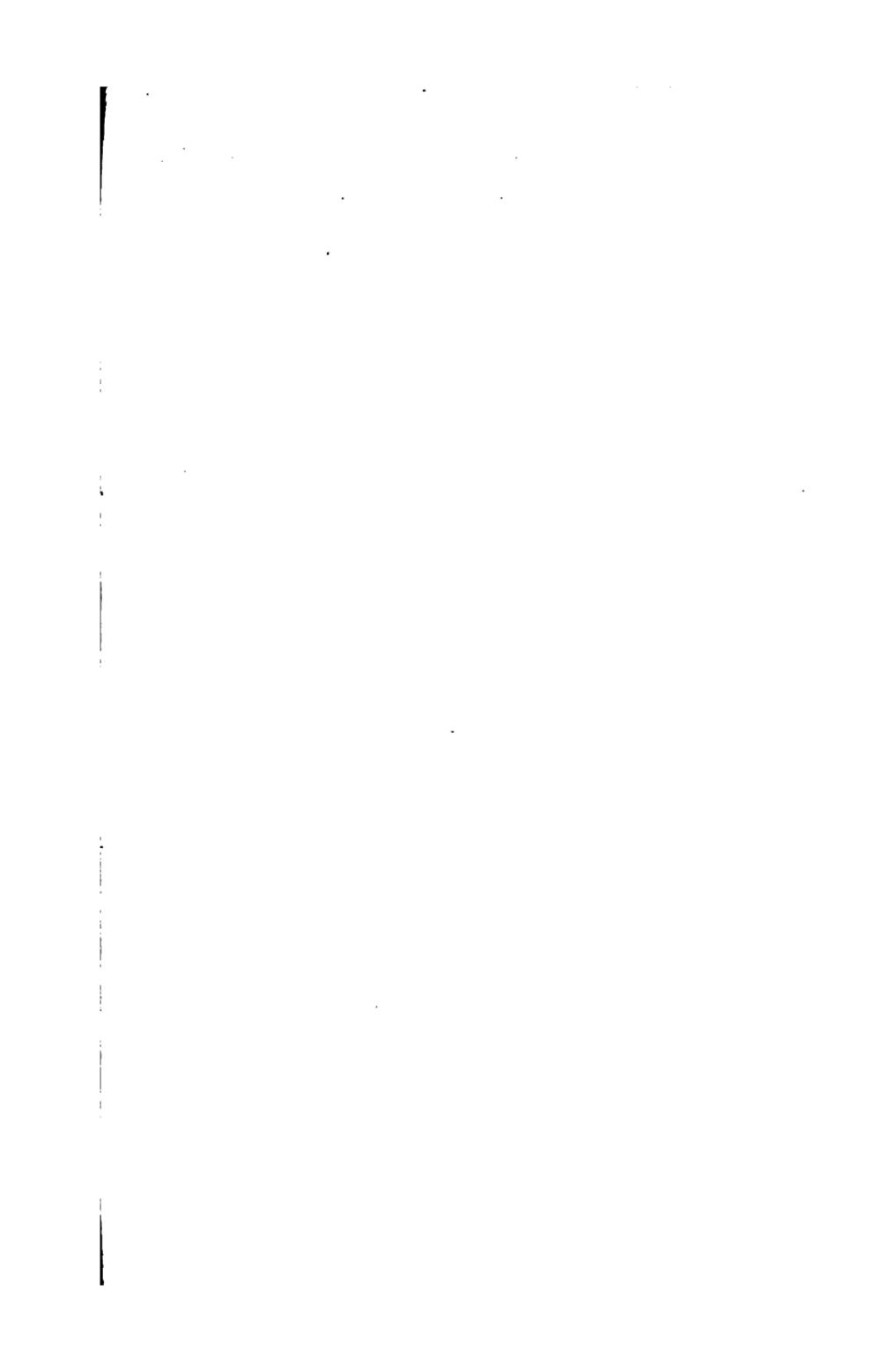


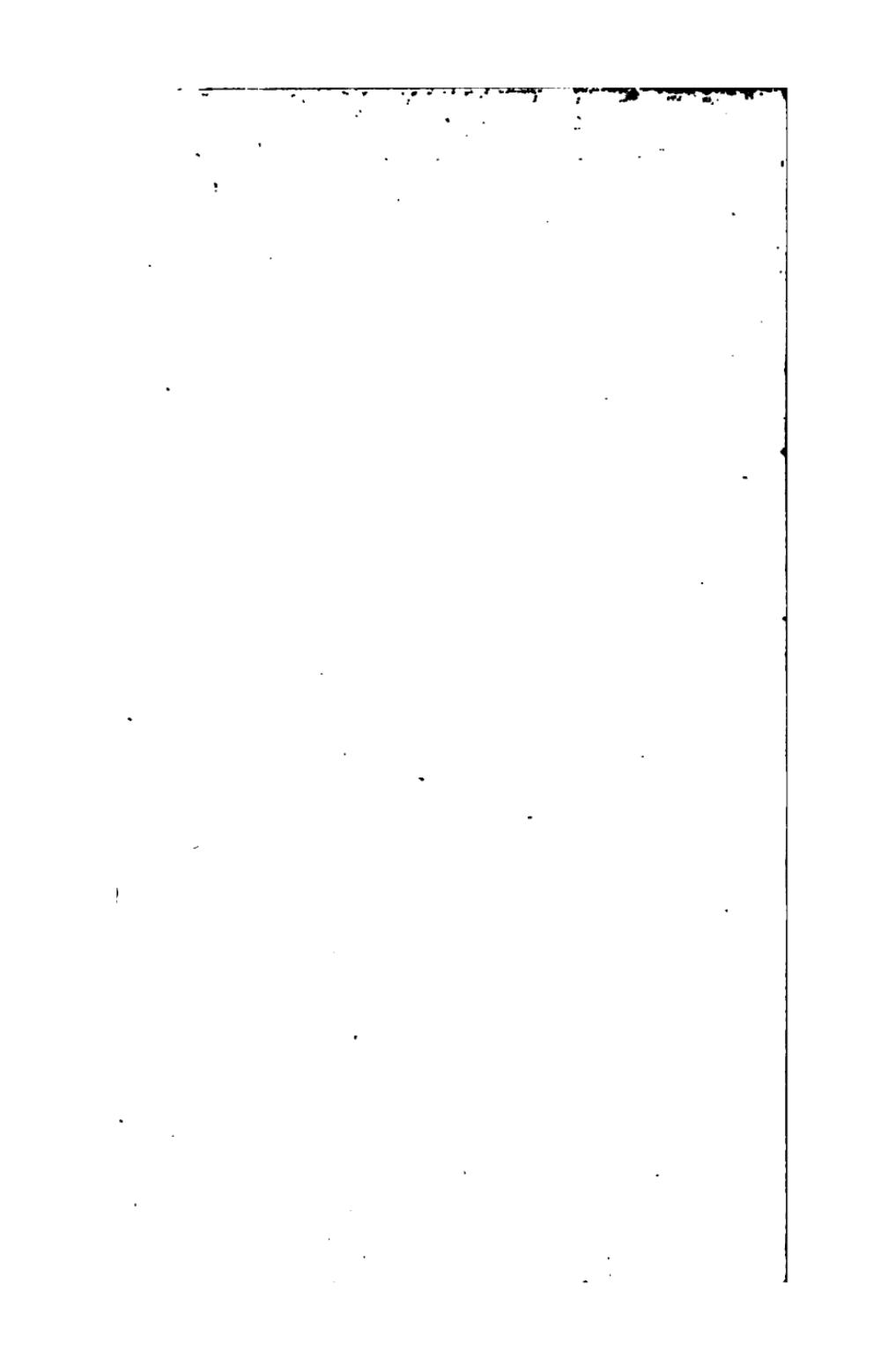




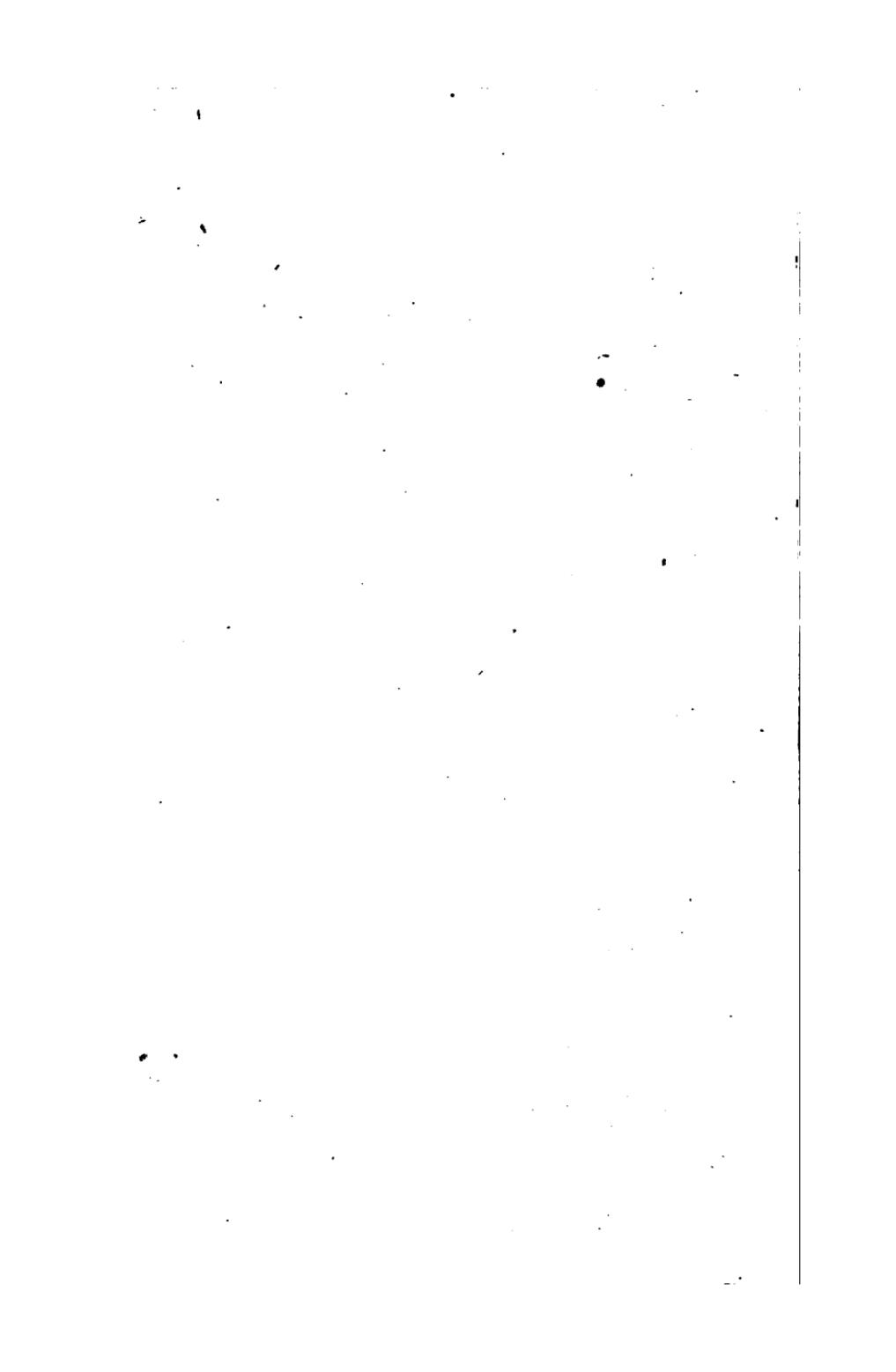








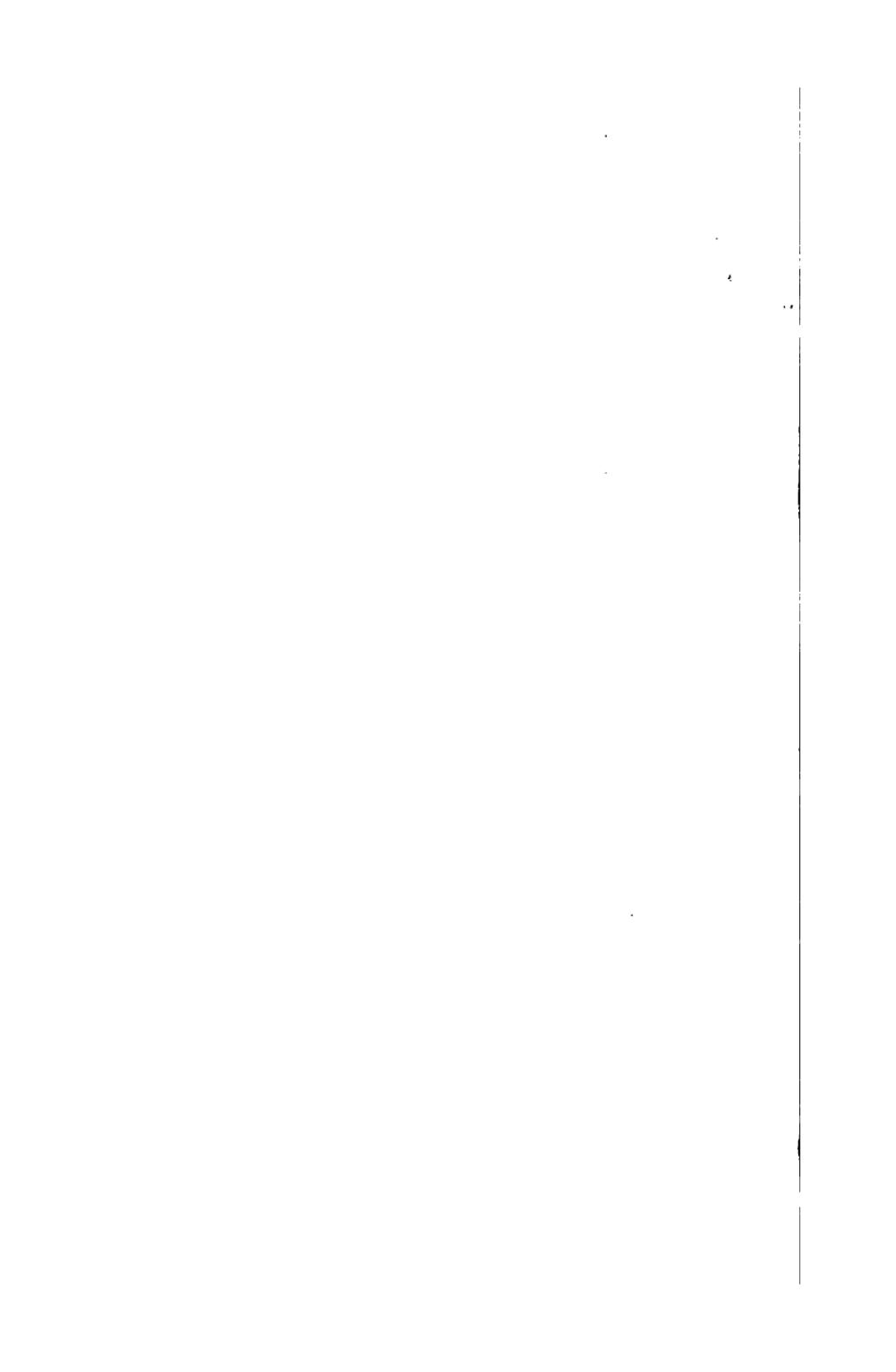












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